

ATTENDING AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS

1. City of Santa Barbara
2. DWR
3. Ventura County Watershed Protection District
4. USACE
5. Ventura Citizens for Hillside Preservation
6. Resources Conservation District, Ventura County
7. Santa Barbara County

SUMMARY

Ed Demesa from USACE gave quick opening remarks and stressed the important work that went into *California’s Flood Future* from the local, State and Federal perspectives.

DWR’s Terri Wegener and USACE’s Kim Gavigan lead the approximately 60-minute Riverside presentation. A deeper, although brief, discussion of each *California’s Flood Future* recommendation followed.

Key Questions/Suggestions Included:

- There is no one size fits all approach, even within regions
- Methodologies and data need to be coordinated between regions
- Local agencies cannot afford to develop risk assessment using different tools – need one consistent approach that can be applied in different ways for federal, state, and local agencies
- Most members of the public only care about floods if they need to buy flood insurance. Current program misses renters in floodplains.
- The state can assist locals in educating the public and work with local groups and NGOs to educate local elected. Educate and inform public involved in local watershed groups about risk.
- Emergency response exercises can be expanded to the public
- Different types of floods require different land use practices
- Communication within a region is important
- The state IRWM delivery process can be improved. Not all flood management projects are good IRWM projects.
- The transportation model makes more sense for the regional decision making bodies to make decisions
- Permitting is an issue for Flood management projects. There is inconsistent interpretation of regulations. ESA is becoming an issue for capital and O&M projects. DWR should reconvene the permitting committee it lead in the past to help address issues.
- Need changes to existing funding model. Flood agencies are currently constrained by Proposition 218. Local flood agencies need help removing funding obstacles.

RECOMMENDATIONS DISCUSSION

(Italics indicate ideas or phrases from meeting presenters)

Recommendation 1

Conduct regional flood risk assessments to better understand statewide flood risk.

- It can't be one size fits all even within a region - we have flood control projects that span the gamut of what we do. The best we can do (one example) is 20 year protection, while in Goleta there is a project that looks at 100 year protection. Another looks at 200 year. When you set reduction goals they can't be to a certain level because we'll never achieve it.
- On sea level rise, this isn't one size fits all. The Delta is different than in Santa Barbara. Impacts of sea level rise vary dramatically depending on where you are.
- There is a highly detailed procedure the Corps uses for identifying risk but FEMA uses a whole different tool. We can't support both tools and both methodologies. What is the state doing to ensure we are using a more uniform process?
 - *Different agencies have different ways of looking at things. They are not necessarily all headed in the same direction. Each of these recommendations are interrelated but we do need to understand more about flood risk.*
- As a State or Federal agency you stay within methods you adopted but at a local level we have to look at both of these methods. As you can imagine, getting arms around all of these methods on different projects becomes very cumbersome. We want you all to get together and figure it out.

Recommendation 2

Increase public and policymaker awareness about flood risks to facilitate informed decisions.

- Sometimes prioritizing advertising can be difficult. Maybe the State could work with local agencies?
- Look at funding streams for local/regional flood protection agencies' outreach opportunities. Written materials – do you live by a levee? – we all have a lot of this information. We should build on what we already have and then make the messaging more consistent.
- Ninety-nine percent of the public are going to ask “do I have to buy flood insurance?” and if they don't need it, they won't care.
- We are trying to meet target audience – insurance deals with homeowners/buyers but a lot of people are renters.
- A lot of people are going away from paper –think about other media besides brochures, think of TV and social media and public announcements. We need to reach beyond the traditional.
- A few interesting ways things have gone here in Ventura – two rivers – there has been a lot of development in Santa Clarita watershed region. Pretend that there will never be that much

water again. In Ventura there was an initiation/proposed development near the Ventura river. People got organized and worked with the city and it was taken off the table. It wasn't just local residents it was people who were interested in protecting the watershed. This was a successful effort. This tie in really well with what you guys are doing. Would help in the protection and

- *Working with local groups to have an understanding of flood risk as decisions are made.*

Recommendation 3

Increase support for flood emergency preparedness, response, and recovery programs to reduce flood impacts.

- When you're saying conduct regular exercises, what do you mean? Is that open ended?
 - *Maybe flood emergency exercises could be expanded to others beyond emergency management and water management.*
- Most counties do these [types of exercises]. They're being done at the county level in most counties with emergency management section. In my area it's being done and isn't a big deficiency. We hold four a year in Santa Barbara, and look at flooding, fire, tsunami, terrorism, all natural hazards. We just finished construction of a new JOC/emergency operation center.

Recommendation 4

Encourage land use planning practices that reduce the consequences of flooding.

- Be careful because when I read recommendation I think of levees. Again, limited development in floodplains –when you say this sometimes it is part of an ecosystem where you want to maintain those elements. There are floodplains that don't have the same function and values as a wetland for example.
 - *Need to consider this recommendation specific to location and geography; flood hazard areas vs. flood plans terminology.*
- This doesn't mean prohibition – you can develop areas where many would agree there should be no development there. With the local issues, like in many counties, the flood control district does flood control inside cities. The district doesn't tell cities where to develop so if incentives are tied to what they do, there is another problem unless everyone is working together.

Recommendation 5

Implement flood management from regional, systemwide, and statewide perspectives to provide multiple benefits.

- What I view as the "IRWM process" is not the model to follow. The idea is sound but the application is flawed. Between the money the state has to spend and the money we have to spend to implement, we are wasting money. If we have to do a flood IRWM plan (that is a binder this thick, and no one is going to read it) you are going to have resistance from many areas.

- How do you prioritize? Will Santa Barbara take second seat to Los Angeles because they have less people? What you want to do is to come up with a formula and then the state decides how to prioritize.
- But if a prioritized project is being weighed up against other areas of the State, it is problematic and not fair. One area is not more valuable.
- The transportation funding model is what we wanted to see for flood control.
 - *The term prioritize has room for interpretation.*
- I thought this slide was referring to grant funding. As an RCD we get a lot of grant funding – I thought when you put this up you were referring to various government funds.
- IRWM program has some positives and some things to improve on.
- The IRWM system is inefficient (cost to administer and local cost to apply, just to get projects going. We are competing with a lot of supply projects. I think they should be integrated with other benefits but the problem is that when you look at supply, sewer and flood control – flood control is the least funded.
- When we submit a flood project to IRWM, we are seeing that money is going to supply. In IRWM we are at a disadvantage when we look for flood control funding. The counties are not empowered to make these decisions. The State is holding the power. The transportation model makes more sense for the regional decision-making bodies to make these decisions.
- We had a project but due to overwhelming paperwork people did not apply.
- In the Central Valley, supply and flood protection are completely linked. Outside I don't know that this link is quite as strong. You build a flood plain project in the Delta and you are also protecting water supply.
 - *Flood projects shouldn't be dinged when up against other types of projects in a region.*

Recommendation 6

Increase collaboration among public agencies to improve flood management planning, policies and investments.

- I think with the permitting issue we see – the collaboration is now going to be a two way street because we need each other. Permitting task force and DWR many years ago played a leadership role – this is a model to reconsider because we did have some successes. Potentially a legislative solution may be required.
- The way the law is written and interpreted is part of the problem.
- Multi-benefit: many resource agencies don't want this, they want their own benefit and then no one gets anything.

Recommendation 7**Establish sufficient and stable funding mechanisms to reduce flood risk.**

- Through prop 218, make flood protection a utility and maybe the State doesn't need to be in business of bonds as much. Let local citizens make their own decisions.
- This process seems like it is just repeating what was done in prop 84 – is this really what we need to do?
 - *Need to address revenue as opposed to another bond.*

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